

English 207: Cyberculture Final Project Assignment

Length and Due Dates

Length: 1,500 to 2,000 words

Proposal Due: Friday, February 29, by 10:00 p.m. via Collect It

Poster Presentation Due: Tuesday, March 11 or Thursday, March 13, at the **beginning** of class

Final Draft Due: Tuesday, March 18, by 10:00 p.m. via Collect It

Assignment

For your final project, you will explore online community, gaming, virtual politics, or identity production in personal home pages. Your goal is to make an argument about how individuals construct themselves online, engage with digital games, interact in internet spaces, or connect and distinguish their virtual and physical existences. To do so, you will examine online primary sources: personal web pages, blogs, games, web communities or political action sites. Moreover, you will draw upon at least two critical articles we have read during the second half of the course; you may select texts from *The Cybercultures Reader* or from assigned web sites. You may also incorporate articles assigned the first five weeks of class, ideas from your peers' postings, notes from class discussion, and sources read outside of class.

The project includes three stages: a proposal, an in-class poster presentation in which you will answer viewers' questions, and a final draft. You will receive feedback from me and/or your peers at all stages. As with the artifact analysis, you may present the final project as a traditional essay, a document with hyperlinks and/or images, or a web site. Similarly, your poster may be print or electronic.

Guidelines

1. Think of the final project as a case study in which you investigate people's online practices, examine how digital technologies facilitate and/or restrict these practices and consider how the scholarly articles we've read adequately or inadequately explain your observations.
2. Since you are examining the work and interactions of human subjects, you must follow some ethical guidelines. Unless you are discussing your own blog, online discussion postings, or gaming behavior, do not identify a subject by his or her given name. Use screen names or general descriptions. Obey the privacy policies of the community you study. For example, you may not reference information a user has deemed private unless you have the person's express permission.
3. Assertions regarding online practices should be supported by description of the web page, game, or online environment; report of user actions; summary, paraphrase or quotation of text (web narrative, comments, etc.); and/or screen shots or images.
4. Do not forget the discussion that has taken place on the class posting board. You have already written about and received responses to your ideas on all of the listed topics.
5. When citing sources, consistently use your field's preferred format. Please include a list of works cited in your project.
6. If you are having difficulty devising an approach to the assignment or you want feedback on your ideas-in-progress, visit my office hours or email me to arrange an appointment.
7. If you would like to build a web site, but do not know how, you may attend one of Catalyst's free web publishing workshops. For a description of the workshops, a schedule, and links to online curricula, see <http://catalyst.washington.edu/workshops>.

Proposal Assignment

Length: 500 to 750 words

Due: Friday, February 29, by 10:00 p.m. via Collect It

The proposal assignment allows you to develop a tentative thesis, pose arguments related to this thesis, identify potential evidence and consider organizational strategies for your final project. You may also integrate screenshots into the proposal, particularly as you discuss the primary sources you will analyze in the project. In completing the proposal, you will produce a roadmap to guide your drafting process. The proposal should include the following components:

- A tentative title for the project.
- The subject you plan to address: online identity construction, gaming, interaction in virtual communities, relationship between online and physical existences.
- The primary sources you plan to examine: specific blogs, web pages, games, online communities (provide URLs).
- A tentative thesis: What argument do you plan to make?
- A discussion of development and support
 - Supporting claims: What points will you need to make in order to develop your thesis? List each point you plan to make and explain its relation to the thesis in one or two sentences.
 - Evidence: What evidence will you use to support each of your points? Describe the web sites, games or community interactions you plan to analyze. After your citation of the evidence, briefly explain why the particular evidence you have selected supports your point. In other words, what is the connection between your point and your evidence?
- Working bibliography of critical articles: List the scholarly sources you plan to include.
- A list of any questions you have regarding your ideas-in-progress.
- Design (Web site)
 - Site design: Describe how the site will be organized (one page for introduction, one for links, one for "about"; separate pages for various sites analyzed, etc.). What information will you put on which page? What navigation elements will you include (links to all parts of site on each page, links to home on each page and to all parts of site on home page only, etc.) If you wish, you may draw a chart that shows how the site's pages will connect to each other. Specify how you want viewers to proceed through the site.

While I have listed the elements you should include, you can address them in an order you wish. For example, you may integrate the description of primary sources into the discussion of development and support. You may also incorporate anything else that will help you draft the project (excerpts from your electronic responses; quotations from class discussions or others' electronic responses; references to sources read for class or found via research, etc.). If you choose to include images in the proposal, you can grab screen shots from with a free capture utility, or you can do a Google image search.

Project Grading

The final project assignment is worth 140 points, divided as follows:

- **Proposal:** 20 points, graded on credit/no-credit basis, with full points granted to proposals that contain all required elements and demonstrate serious engagement with the ideas the author will explore in the project.
- **Poster Presentation:** 20 points, grading criteria to follow
- **Final Draft of Project:** 100 points, grading criteria to follow

I will not accept late poster presentations or project proposals. Late final projects will receive a 10-point deduction per day late, including weekends. Failure to submit a final project proposal or poster presentation will result in a 20-point deduction, as responding from feedback constitutes an essential part of the assignment. I will make exceptions to the lateness policy only in cases of documented illness or family emergency.